

**Ranking Category—Environmental Quality Incentives Program
Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3
(BEGINNING FARMER/RANCHER, LIMITED RESOURCE FARMER/RANCHER,
SOCIALY DISADVANTAGED FARMER/RANCHER)**

Primary Resource Concerns

- **Insufficient Water–Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water**

Eligible Land Uses

- **Crop**

Additional Requirements for this Category

- **Applicants must be located in designated priority area.**
- **Producer will verify that water savings (water right) will not be used elsewhere if transitioning to non-irrigated land. If transitioning, all acres under the current water right will be taken out of irrigation for the contract period.**
- **Application Water Usage for the water right must meet or exceed the minimum use guideline of 45 percent. Of the years irrigated, the application acres must have been irrigated at an average rate of at least six acre-inches/acre/year.**
- **State policy will be followed in determining land eligibility for irrigated land. See Kansas Supplement, Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 515, Section KS515.52. National policy, CPM, Part 515, Section 515.80(C)(7), states that a participant may receive assistance to implement an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) schedule of operations for water conservation if the assistance will facilitate a reduction in ground and surface water use on the agricultural operation.**
- **If the land continues to be irrigated, producer reports to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) or water districts will be used to determine the benchmark condition of water use in the ag operation. Producers will furnish reports from the previous five years to determine the average benchmark condition, and each year during the contract to ensure a reduction in the ground and surface water use in the ag operation.**
 - **If there are hardships that result in discrepancies in the previous five years of irrigation used to determine the benchmark condition of water use, another year can be substituted (hardship example—the producer stops irrigating due to hail damaged crops). Refer to Section 512.57 on documenting hardships.**
- **If the land continues to be irrigated, Conservation Practice 449, Irrigation Water Management, is required in the conservation plan and will receive financial assistance if not already established, per program policy.**
- **Producer must ensure proper wellhead protection to ensure groundwater protection.**

State Issues

Answer the following question if the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). The agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1 will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the state priority category.

- (1) Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other state level questions. If the answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (400 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following three questions describing your plan to obtain a net water savings in your agricultural operation. If none apply, leave the answers “NO.”

- (2a) Producer will install a five-year crop rotation that will reduce their current water use by at least 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. (200 points)
- (2b) Producer will install a five-year crop rotation that will reduce their current water use by greater than or equal to 35 percent, but less than 50 percent, using their current irrigation system. (150 points)
- (2c) The entire unit of concern (100 percent) will be converted from irrigated to non-irrigated (STARTING with the first FULL cropping season of the contract) on the entire water right. Producer will install proper wellhead protection and will verify that water rights will not be used elsewhere. (250 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following three questions related to application water usage: {Water Usage = Average Acres Irrigated (divided by) Authorized Acres}. Only years that have been irrigated in the last five years will be averaged. If none apply, leave all answers as “NO.”

- (3a) Application Water Usage, by water right, is at least 90 percent. (100 points)
- (3b) Application Water Usage, by water right, is between 80 and 89.9 percent. (75 points)
- (3c) Application Water Usage, by water right, is between 66 and 79.9 percent. (50 points)

Answer the following questions related to the application acres.

- (4a) Greater than or equal to 50 percent of the application acres are on soils unsuitable for dryland farming and will be converted to permanent cover. (50 points)
- (4b) Any part of the application acres, but less than 50 percent are on soils unsuitable for dryland farming and will be converted to permanent cover. (25 points)

Local Issues

Answer the following question related to the application:

- (1) Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other local level questions. If the answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section. (250 points)

If applicable, answer ONE of the following questions related to the application acres. If none apply, leave the answers “NO.”

- (2a) Application acres have historically had 8.1 to 13.0 acre-inches applied, as determined by data from the state annual water report record, supplied by GMD 3. (75 points)
- (2b) Application acres have historically had over 13.0 acre-inches applied, as determined by data from the state annual water report record, supplied by GMD 3. (100 points)

Answer the following question related to the application:

- (3) The applicant will retire water rights by filing a Voluntary Waiver of Hearing and Dismissal of Water Rights with the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources. (150 points)